Triumph and Despair at The Hunger Parley, Pps. 2-3

Straight From the Crystal Ball of The Army's Top Guru

It is my opinion that if we had continued to bomb, the war would be over at this time—or would be nearly over. The enemy would have fully realized that he had nothing to gain by continuing the struggle.

—Gen. Westmoreland, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, at the House Appropriations hearings on the 1970 Defense budget.

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The Atrocities Nixon Condones And Continues

The Pinkville massacre falls into perspective if we remember that from the first days of the struggle against the French Gen. Giap's strategy has been to fight a "People's War." Without our ever fully realizing it, ours has become an "anti-People's" war. Some years ago an American Colonel who was never identified, put it very plainly. Mao Tse-Tung, the foremost theoretician of the People's War, said that the guerrilla swims among the people as a fish does in the sea. The U. S. Colonel said we would "dry up the sea." Our strategy has been to destroy the villages and the crops, to drive out or kill the people, wherever we suspect Viet Cong. We set out to create a desert where no "fish" could live. The soldiers at Pinkville may not have been ordered to kill women and children but they were certainly ordered to burn down the village and kill the livestock, to destroy their homes and their food supply. If the main target of a "People's War" is to win the confidence and support of the peasantry, the main target of an Anti-People's War is to uproot or destroy the peasantry the guerrillas may have won over. From such a strategy Pinkvilles come naturally.

The Biggest Booby Trap of All

In the rules of war, soldiers and civilians used to be separate categories. The strategy of the Anti-People's War has given us that legal monstrosity we now read about—the "innocent civilian." This implies that some civilians are innocent and some are guilty. The latter are not only fair game but the safe rule when in doubt is to shoot first and investigate later, or just add them to the body count. Horrible as this may sound, it has its logic and the logic grows stronger as the spiral of hate mounts on both sides. The guerrillas use civilians in their area—like the home population in any war—for many auxiliary tasks. The civilians—including women and children—take up those tasks ever more willingly as they see their homes and livestock, their menfolk and ancestral graves, destroyed by indiscriminate bombing and artillery fire and by "search and destroy" missions like the one in Pinkville. Relations are not improved by calling them "gooks" or—more politely, as in Lt. Calley's indictment—"Oriental human beings." They retaliate with home-made mines and booby traps, including the "ponji", the sharpened stick coated with excrement. The biggest and dirtiest booby trap of all is the filthy pit of this war itself, from which we emerge stinking in the nostrils of mankind.

Maybe If People Were Just A Little Dumber?

Rep. Jamie Whitten (D.-Miss.): How are you going to make folks believe if the U. S. and the South Vietnamese couldn't contain the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, how in the world are you going to make anybody believe the South Vietnamese can do it by themselves? . . .

Gen. Westmoreland (Army Chief of Staff): Well, I think there are two things that can be done. One is somehow to give the American people a deep appreciation . . . of the way the enemy has been weakened progressively . . . and how amateurish his tactics are, so that every time he goes into battle he loses an inordinate number of men . . . Second, the American people should be assured that the South Vietnamese army, DESPITE THE WAY IT HAS BEEN PORTRAYED BY THE U.S. PRESS, [emphasis added] is doing very well . . . We are ahead of schedule . . .

Rep. Whitten: For 10 years this committee has been listening pretty much to the same type of thing from that side of the table. The American people have been reading it. The part that you did not touch on was: How are we going to get it over to the people, make them believe it?

Gen. Westmoreland: I am afraid I cannot answer that.

—Pps. 166–8 Pt. 7, House Appropriations hearings on the 1970 Defense budget, released Dec. 2.

There is a flurry of stories from Saigon about "reindoctrinating" troops on the humane treatment of civilians. But we are dealing here not with an occasional atrocity but with a deliberate policy. What a fear-crazed and hate-filled GI may do in occupying a hostile village can be put down to the brutalization of war. The real crime is higher up. When the President announced that he was revising our chemical and bacteriological warfare program and sending the Geneva Protocol to the Senate for ratification, it looked like a gesture of contrition. It turned out to be the most hypocritical kind of public relations. For it excepted from these restrictions the two weapons of gas and chemical warfare from which the civilian population of Vietnam suffer most. These are the tear and lung gases which drive them out of their home-made bombing shelters into the open where our B-52s and fragmentation "anti-personnel" bombs can destroy them, and the herbicides which kill their crops and threaten —like Thalidomide—their unborn children.

How can we convince the world that we have not turned

(Continued On Page Four)

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Triumph and Despair Closely Linked in The Hunger Conference . . .

There was a moment of triumph at last week's conference here on hunger and there was a moment of despair. They came close to each other. The moment of triumph came when the Conference by acclamation approved a 5-point program, the most radical of its kind ever adopted at an official meeting, which would indeed wipe out hunger in America if implemented. It included a guaranteed annual income of $5500 a year for a family of four, as compared with the $1600 a year plus $720 in food stamps offered by Nixon's pending welfare legislation. The moment of despair came when the conviction spread that all this would remain *manana* unless there was pressure on the White House to act before the conference disbanded. Militants seized the platform in the huge Sheraton Hall of the Sheraton-Park Hotel, and begged the delegates to *stay-in* until the White House responded. Their pleas grew more desperate as more and more delegates walked out until barely a hundred were left. Even these lost heart when the lights began to dim and the TV cameras were dismantled. It looked to the real spokesmen of the hungry as if words were again the only outcome.

The School Lunch Scandal

Even a handful, had they stayed all night, launching a continuous stay-in and talk-in, a filibuster of the desperate poor, might soon have slowly attracted support and captured the imagination of the country, or forced the government to call the police and put them out into the cold, to which they are so well accustomed. What the radicals wanted was a stay-in until the President invoked Section 11 of the Disaster Relief Act of 1969 and declared hunger a national emergency. Less than half the poor now get either food stamps or surplus commodities. Even the school lunch program, though 24 years old, still reaches less than half the country's hungry schoolchildren. A former Agriculture Department official—Rodney E. Leonard—told the conference more than half the inadequate school lunch funds go to purposes other than feeding the children. The worst school lunch record is not in the South but in the ghettoes of the Northeast.* The *stay-in* pleaders wanted something to take home: free breakfast and lunch programs for all needy children, free food stamps for the poorest, a cut in the cost for the rest, and either food stamps or surplus commodities in the 307 counties which do not have either now.

*For the full story, told with burning passion, read Nick Kotz's new book, Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America (Prentice Hall).

From Moon Man To Con Man

Q. Can you explain your job for us, please?

A. Now, if we can talk very clearly from a distance of a quarter million miles, I would hope that some of that expertise or technique might be carried over toward opening up the lines of communication which we presently find somewhat constricted, particularly in regard to the youth of this country.

Q. Col. Collins, what made you decide to trade in your space suit for a diplomat's pinstripe?

A. The hope to make our country more united in its approach to foreign policy.

Q. What's your attitude toward student dissent, particularly as to the war in Vietnam?

A. Most of the dissenters are poorly equipped with the facts.

Q. Col. Collins, have you had any prior experience in public affairs during your military career?

A. No.

—Col. Michael Collins, who commanded the first trip to the moon, at his first press conference as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, after 17 years in the Air Force, Nov. 28 (abridged).

The Administration holds back because it is fighting inflation. But what kind of fight on inflation is this, when the main cause of the inflation—the war in Vietnam—goes on? It is the more than $100 billion spent on Vietnam, without price controls or war profits taxes on those who made the most money from it, which ignited the inflationary prairie fire. The latest Pentagon figures show its spending this fiscal year is only down $1.6 billion from last. The Joint Economic Committee's latest report on the Federal budget says that while the rate of Vietnam spending is expected to be down $8 billion by the middle of next year, non-Vietnam defense spending will be up $4.5 billion a year by then, absorbing most of that "peace dividend," which could feed the hungry. If the war flares up, or the Saigon regime totters, Vietnam spending will go up several billion overnight. There will not be a moment's hesitation. Why not some action at home, on the hunger front, where the poor have paid twice for the war in Vietnam? First they paid in hunger for the inflation, which has reduced the dollar's value by 16.6 cents since 1964. Now the first-to-be-fired are paying again in the deflationary program, which depends for its efficacy on fewer jobs and reduced Federal spending. The poor bear the brunt of the economic see-saw, the ups *and* the downs.

Closed Door Testimony Shows Pentagon Chiefs Still See Peace A Long Way Off

Chairman Mahon (D.-Tex.): I interpret your testimony to mean that we are not looking forward to an early ending of the war in Vietnam, but that we are looking forward to shifting more of the burden of fighting the war to the South Vietnamese. Is that about right?

Secretary of the Army Resor: That is about right, except that I don't look forward to an indefinite war . . .

Mr. Mahon: Do you think that the ending of the hostilities in Vietnam is a matter of months or years?

Gen. Westmoreland: I believe, sir, we can anticipate that the intensity of combat generally will subside . . . I believe we can anticipate having forces in Vietnam for several years . . . The uncertain element has been that of will. We have not projected to the regime in Hanoi the will to stick with this until we grind them down . . .

Mr. Whitten (D.-Miss.): . . . for ten years it (the war) has been going on . . . We were told by the former Secretary of Defense for a number of years . . . that we could expect that this thing would be over and he would give us a timetable. That never did pan out . . . The enemy has not accepted defeat . . . how much credence can we give your honest calculations?

Secretary Resor: . . . I think we seriously underestimated the problem . . . I think today we have a much better understanding of the problem. Accordingly I think that our estimates of the current situation should be significantly more valid. However, I do not want to be in the position of predicting to you how long it will take. I think that is one of the lessons we have learned, that it is dangerous to make predictions. I can only say I think time is running on our side in Vietnam. Therefore if we can just buy some time in the U.S. by these periodic progressive withdrawals and the American people can just shore up their patience and determination, I think we can bring this to a successful conclusion. . . .

Mr. Whitten: General, could you add to that?

Gen. Westmoreland: . . . I have never made the prediction that this would be other than a long war.

—Pps. 162–174 Pt. 7 House Appropriations hearings on the 1970 Defense budget. Oct. 8. Released Dec. 2.

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. . . How The Poor Pay Twice For The Inflation The War Caused

In one way it is a miracle that this Administration, whose constituency is the smug and comfortable, called a hunger conference at all. The average Republican thinks people are poor only because they do not want to work. It was also a miracle that a conference which started out looking as if it were pre-packed with advertising men and food industry executives and programed to discuss "nutrition" instead of hunger should have been turned around by a handful of militants to the point where it voted $5500 a year for a family of four. This was largely the triumph of those wonderful black welfare mothers who run the National Welfare Rights Organization with the skilful aid of George Wiley, the chemistry professor who has discovered the elixir to invigorate and organize those who are most desperate in the ghettoes. Their pleas, and those of the other oppressed, Indian, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and white Appalachian, had an impact far beyond their numbers. The voiceless found voices and hunger bred eloquence. What human resources lie wasted in submerged groups which can from among their own ill-educated ranks breed spokesmen of such power!

"For All Time" or Manana Forever?

But how many times does hunger have to be documented before there is adequate action to end it? Nixon said last May that the moment had come to end it *for all time*. But his Department of Agriculture is fighting to block in the House the Senate-passed McGovern food stamp bill. The Republican leadership is trying to gut the poverty program, and also the voting rights act which has given the poor blacks in the South a little political muscle. Nixon's speech opening the conference showed real feeling only when he told again that story of eating cottage cheese with ketchup on his own reducing diet. He said the conference "marks an historic milestone." Of action by the government? Or further despair on the lonely Indian reservations and in the ghettoes where only the rats grow fat?

Even as the hungry pleaded, the Senate was putting the finishing touches on a scandalous "tax reform" bill which might have supplied all the funds we need to end hunger. To close the tax loopholes on oil depletion, capital gains and other tax rackets, would bring in $12 billion in extra revenue. Instead the minor reforms will bring in only $1.4 billion the next fiscal year. The Senate, for example, would cut only $155 million from the $1.6 billion annual subsidy to oil millionaires via depletion. Even the so-called tax relief to the poor will disproportionately open new avenues of tax reduction for middle and upper incomes. Even under the Gore bill, almost half the benefits will go to those with earnings from $10,000 to $20,000 a year. A third of the House "relief" bill would go to those in the top 10% of taxpayers.

It is time to launch a campaign on the broadest possible front to make people realize that clear air and water, safer streets, and livable cities, are more important than an extra car or even a summer home. The battle against poverty, pollution, urban sprawl, racism, drug addiction and crime are related facets of one complex problem. The quality of life will improve or degenerate for all, rich and poor, unless people can be taught to see the mutual interest in expanded spending on the starved public sector and less on the wasteful private sector. And the first step must be an end to the war in Vietnam, and a sharp curb on the growing militarism and imperialism which can breed more Vietnams. Half what the Pentagon spends each year could wipe out poverty and all that goes with it in ten years. *But Nixon's press conference at press time showed that he regarded such thinking as a menace to free enterprise. It also disclosed that he was turning thumbs down on effective food stamp and school lunch legislation, and throwing the poverty program to the wolves. His words foreshadowed a hungry winter again.*

Silent Majority Footnotes

The Louis Harris poll, owned by the Chicago Tribune, a paper even Agnew can love, reports a turnabout in peace sentiment (Wash. Post Dec. 4). Its poll after the October Moratorium was 45 to 39% against the peace demonstrations. Its poll after the November Mobilization was 46 to 45% in favor. The answers to two specific questions were striking. The first was whether the war was "morally indefensible." In October 51% agreed and 35% disagreed. In November 52% agreed and 37% disagreed. The second question was whether demonstrators were "just a bunch of hippies." In October 55% disagreed with this and 33% agreed. In November 58% disagreed and 31% agreed.

Senator Young of Ohio put into the Congressional Record Nov. 13 (p. S14289) a letter from an Ohio National Guardsman who said that they were asked to write letters to the White House supporting Nixon on the war. The State Commander called for a report on how many men in the unit complied. "The instructions also stated, the letter said, "that the letters would have more 'effect' if we didn't include our military rank but signed them as private citizens."

Fulbright Exposes the Pentagon's Multi-Million Dollar Operation Brainwash

On June 12 Mendel Rivers told the House that "if any member of Congress wants to introduce a motion to cut the budget of the Defense Department Public Affairs Office by two-thirds he will have my whole-hearted support." The passing remark by the Pentagon's Mr. Wonderful somehow went unnoticed in the day's business, but on Dec. 4, J. William Fulbright remembered and took him up on it.

By the Defense Department's own accounting, the military spent $27.7 million this year shining its public image. That represents an increase of more than 1000% since 1959, the year Congress removed limits on the Pentagon's public affairs fund. During the same period the total defense budget has increased a mere 60% or so from $46 to $76 billion. Fulbright proposes to cut the P.R. bankroll to $10 million next year, a step which he says is "a start—but only a start" in bringing the Pentagon's propaganda machine under control.

This P.R. machine overlooks no medium or public relations device from releases for hometown newspapers to television shows. The Air Force has a dandy half-hour show on the C–5A, for example. The Army produces the Big Picture for the public's TV-viewing pleasure. The Dept. of Defense keeps 5 camera crews in Vietnam—the equivalent of a major network's complement—to cover the "aspects of the military participation in S.E. Asia often ignored or bypassed by national media." There is also an ambitious program of public speakers. Gen. Westmoreland, for example, gave 59 public addresses in a period from Aug. 7, 1968 to May 1969. Each service offers junkets for "civilian leaders." Most popular tours are to Las Vegas, Hawaii and Florida. There is even Spotmaster, which is like Dial-a-Prayer for military types. In Washington dial OX 5-6201 for the latest DOD news.

So goes the Pentagon's Operation Brainwash. As Fulbright stressed in each of his four speeches, "there is something basically unwise and undemocratic about a system which taxes the public to finance a propaganda campaign aimed at persuading the same taxpayers that they must spend more tax dollars to subvert their independent judgment."

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Use Of Crop-Killers in Vietnam Violates U.S. Army's Own Rules of War

(Continued From Page One)

barbarian when a White House announcement, designed to take the curse off Pinkville and demonstrate our concern for international law, perpetuates a gross violation of it? We refer to the use of crop-killers. It is said that the Geneva Protocol banning chemical warfare does not mention herbicides. True. But earlier treaties to which we are a party do. The Army Field Manual (FM27-10) in paragraph 37 cites that provision of the Hague Convention of 1907 which says "It is especially forbidden . . . to employ poison or poison weapons." The Army interpretation which follows says this "does not prohibit measures . . . to destroy, through chemical or bacteriological agents, harmless to man, crops intended SOLELY [our emphasis] for consumption by the armed forces (if that fact can be determined)." But even this tortuous sophistry admits we may not destroy crops just because we believe *some* of the supplies may feed guerrillas, and that we may not employ chemical or bacteriological agents which *are* harmful to humans.

What Herbicides Do To Humans

Two years ago the Japan Science Council* released a report on anti-crop warfare in Vietnam which said nearly 1,000 peasants and more than 13,000 livestock had been killed by it. Han Swyter, a former aide to Secretary McNamara, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee Dec. 2 that since 1962 we have sprayed about 100 million pounds of herbicides over four million acres, an area the size of Massachusetts. He said that since late 1967 there have been increasing reports and pictures in the Saigon press of a new kind of abnormality in newly born children. These reports have found confirmation in a still secret report for the National Cancer Institute (See *Scientific Research* for Nov. 10) which found that one herbicide, 2,4,5-T was "probably dangerous" and 2,4-D "potentially dangerous" as teratogenic agents, i.e. capable, like Thalidomide, of producing gross birth defects if ingested by pregnant women. As a result the Pentagon has "restricted" the use of the first, but not the second, substance to areas remote from human population. But how much reliance can be placed on this restriction remains to be seen and the crop-killing itself goes on.

So will the civilian-killing via the tear gas route. The government's position is that the Geneva Protocol does not cover tear gas. The Protocol itself speaks of "asphyxiating, poisonous or *other* gases." [Our emphasis.] The British government ever since 1930, like many other signatories of the Protocol, has held that tear gases, too, are outlawed. Congressman McCarthy (*D.-N.Y.*) told a Montreal audience Dec. 1 that when in London he heard the U. S. government was pressuring the British government to change its position on tear gas. This is not academic in Britain. Imagine the massacre during the blitz if the Nazis had been able to flush people out of the subways and other shelters with tear gases before the bombing, as we do in Vietnam.

The enormous quantities of tear and lung gas we use in Vietnam—almost 14 million pounds since 1964, or more than half the total weight of the mustard gases used by both sides in World War I—testify how far we have gone from exceptional use in "riot-like" circumstances to routine application before bombardment. These are the atrocities Nixon condones and continues.

*p. 153 of Seymour M. Hersh's indispensable recent book Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare (Bobbs Merrill).

What Did Nixon Give Up On Germ War?

What did Nixon give up on Nov. 25 in renouncing the use of bacteriological weapons? Congressman McCarthy, a one-man crusader against germ and chemical warfare, said in his Montreal speech Dec. 1 that "biological weapons really don't have any military value." They are too dangerous to use and too difficult to deliver. Even so it remains to be seen how much work on germ weapons the military will be able to continue under cover of Nixon's exception for "defensive measures." The House Appropriations report (Dec. 3) on the 1970 defense budget says that when the Committee inquired about the saving to be expected from the renunciation of germ warfare, it was given a figure of only $2 million! McCarthy's office estimates the cost of germ war preparations this year between $40 and $50 million. Will pretty much the same work go on as before, but masked as defensive?

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